

From: Jones MV (Michael) - CSC
To: 'microsoft.atr(a)usdoj.gov'
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Subject: Class-Action Suit

I have followed this case very closely, and There is a lot to be argued on either side of the coin. Being a person who works in Information Systems as a Systems Administrator, I will simply share my views and opinions, as I am a user of Both operating systems in my line of work, and I like both of them.

Microsoft: For what they have done for the PC industry, my hat is off to them. The monopolistic power they are today, for the majority of the companies lifespan, was earned. Microsoft, for years, released superior products than its competitors for the PC market. The ease of use and availability is what made Microsoft the company they are today, however when you lead the cow to pasture, you are usually preparing to do one thing, to cut it up once it gets big enough. Microsoft has flexed its financial muscles much too often in the past 3 to 4 years. I feel the web browser wars were the first signs of it, by flooding netscape out of the market by giving people a free alternative, yet Internet Explorer is still property of Microsoft Inc. It is not open-source. This makes a substantial difference in a technical sense. Its like giving a man a fish, rather than teaching him to fish. Once that fish is gone, you have to go back to the same man who gave it to you, and hope he is feeling generous. Nothing is gained by anyone except Microsoft, and many things have changed in the industry since this occurrence. Microsoft now has limited control over what can and can't be viewed on the on the web by PC owners. In order to see certain public web based content, you must now be a Windows user, but moreso than that, a IE user. They offer a free browser, but just for Windows users. They have tools like Active-X, but Just for IE. Have you tried getting to MSN.com with a broswer other than IE? you can't anymore. With Windows XP, Microsoft is outlining its OS to be even more slanted towards monopolistic practices by checking against hardware to validate its really you that is using the OS. A person should not have to validate a hardware upgrade to their OS manufacturer to be able to continue to use their product, which they purchased a liscense to use, when their hardware becomes outdated. Microsoft has done a lot, but now they are doing too much, because there are more and more alternatives out there that are exceptional, and as more and more come around, Microsoft is flexing their muscles more and more to make things as incompatible as possible for the competition, while Microsofts competitors do exactly the opposite.

Redhat: Redhat Linux is an Open Source operating system that Intrigues me. It has, in many ways, filled the gaps that Microsoft OS's couldn't fill, during one of the most diffucult times in our industry to do so. What Redhat lacks is exposure. What Microsoft hopes to prevent by its practices is Redhats exposure. This is wrong. I feel the proposal by Redhat to put their operating systems on the computers in order for Microsoft to be able

to support more schools is the best thing that could happen for both companies in this situation. In time, it will establish competition in the PC OS market once again. This needs to happen, because as Linux becomes more refined, and more streamlined for less technical end users, it will indeed be a prosperous operating system at the desktop level in 4-5 years to come. Linux, is based on UNIX, which has existed much longer than windows and is important to know in this industry. Learning Linux will give people the ability to diversify their knowledge of computer operating systems on several levels. What better place to do this than at school? There are many breeds of UNIX out there, and they are all similar in nature. Learning Redhat Linux, opens the doors for SUSE, Mandrake, Corel, BSD, Slackware, and many others. This school proposal needs to go down to insure a stable, compatible market for the future.

I consider this point in time, in both hardware and software markets, the crossroads of PC's future. On one road, we have Open Source, and on the other we have liscensed based. Without breaking Microsoft up, they will program Linux out of the desktop market, because of the percentage they hold. They are bigger in that market, they are wealthier, they have more history in the desktop model than Linux, so Microsoft had something Redhat will not have if nothing happens to stop them, time. Bigger does not mean better, Older does not mean wiser. Regardless of personal opinion, Redhat has the right to compete, without being driven out by a much larger company with a much bigger checkbook. I've seen many, many efforts by open source companies to work within Microsofts OS, and almost none by Microsoft in comparison. When I see Microsoft Office for Linux, I know then that we will be on an equal playing field, for once, in the PC industry. I am all for standardization, and it is needed in our industry (Standard Document Formats, More Hardware standards, etc), but the tools in which we standardize with need not apply (MS Office, Staroffice, Windows, Linux) If I'm blueprinting a house, weither I use a Paper-Mate pen or a BIC pen does not matter. When I'm blueprinting a house in a CAD program, weither I'm using Windows or Linux shouldn't matter either.

Thank you for your time,

Michael Jones
On site Technician for CSC
On site Technician at the Bay-Valley Complex
A division of Equilon Enterprises LLC
Ph: 661.326.4355 Helpdesk: 1.877.786.5821
mailto:mvjones@equilon.com | mailto:cscscs@equiva.com

Life's a journey, not a destination. -Steven Tyler